

# OUR YOUNG FOLKS

## Santa Claus Abroad.

By M. L. WALLACE.

A little old driver, so jolly and quick,  
I knew in a moment it must be St. Nick!

—Clement C. Moore.

Do you ever wonder, when you hang up your stockings on Christmas Eve, what other little boys and girls all over the world were doing? Perhaps you think that they are all hanging up their stockings, too, going to sleep just as you do, sure that Santa Claus will come pattering over the roofs with his "eight tiny reindeer," and filling your stockings with all sorts of delightful things while you sleep.

No, indeed! If you were a little German child, living, perhaps, near the great city of Munich, you would not be hanging up that stocking with so much certainty. St. Nicholas Eve is a very important occasion there. At 6 o'clock there is a great tramping and ringing of bells outside the door, and then a knock, and in comes Santa Claus himself—St. Nicholas, they call him there, sometimes. That is only another of his names; he has a great many. He is rosy, white-haired and smiling, and wears a suit of fur, with a big cap. He greets everybody cheerfully, and calls each child by his or her name. Every one he asks: "Have you been good this year, little Gretchen (or Hans, or Peter)?" If Gretchen says "Yes," she gets cakes or fruit, and is asked what she wants for a Christmas gift. If she says "No"—and every child must tell the truth to St. Nicholas—she gets a scolding and no gifts at all.

Then St. Nicholas goes merrily away to some other house to question the children there. On Christmas day the promised gifts come and the children are told that the Christ-Child brought them.

St. Nicholas is always, wherever he is found, the servant of the Christ-Child. In northern Germany they call him "Knecht Rupert" ("Servant Rupert"). He comes on Christmas Eve, knocks on the doors, saying that the Christ-Child has sent him. He is dressed in fine clothes, big boots, enormous hat and wears a flaxen wig. He carries a pack of presents on his back.

In south Austria all the children of the town gather in the church on Christmas Eve. Presently St. Nicholas comes, walking in the robes of a bishop. An angel in white walks on either side, carrying cake and nuts. Behind them come strange figures chained together, they wear fantastic costumes and have black faces.

St. Nicholas calls up every child in the church and asks how he has behaved that year. If he has been good he gets the usual cake and nuts.

After this the ugly demons come in and dance around the children, but not to touch them. All the children go home. They put their baskets or dishes on the window sill, say their prayers very solemnly, and go to sleep. In the morning some one has filled the baskets with gifts.

The little French peasant children, who wear heavy wooden shoes, put these inside the fender at night and St. Nicholas puts the gifts in them.

In other parts of France the children hang up their stockings just as we do, but woe to the child who has been bad! His stocking will be filled with old paper, or coals, and a row among the presents, coming after everyone is sleep.

Everyone must have a bath on Christmas Eve. It must be a very thorough bath, and often it is the only one taken the whole year. (Don't you wish you lived on the Scandinavian Peninsula, you small chaps who hate "rubbing"? Then the cake made of meal must be put out in the snow and all the farm animals are given a double allowance of food. The birds are not forgotten, a sheaf of wheat is put out outside for them. Candles are lighted and placed in the window, so the dear Kristine will bring the presents.

There is no St. Nicholas in Scotland. The celebration for the children is usually on Twelfth Night, the presents being given then.

Italian children do not know Santa Claus either. They have their chance at the "Urn of Fate" though; that is a big vase in which are presents, also packages containing nothing at all. Little Giacomo or Assunta put their arms in, taking what comes again and again, until there is nothing left in the "urn." They sometimes have Christmas trees, too.

In the Puritan days in our country the children had no true no Santa Claus—even no holiday on Christmas! There is a story that some boys caught playing in the street on that day were sent into their houses and made to stay there by the stern old governor. How different from our merry day, with old Santa, his pack on his back, creeping in to fill the stockings or standing under a Christmas tree joking with the girls and boys.

So all over the world the spirit typified by Santa Claus, Kris Kringle, or Kristine makes things merry for the children. May he live forever!

## FLORA McFLIMSEY'S WIG.

Little Flora McFlimsey lost all her hair after she had a fever, and she looked so funny with her round, bald head that her mother took her to the wig-maker's to get her a wig. Flora tried on several styles—prim, straight black one, a curly yellow one, a frowny red one, and a fluffy brown one. Which do you think is the most becoming?

To try on the wigs cut out Flora's



These Chinamen wear very pleased smiles as they trudge home, carrying a well-filled basket. You may think that the basket contains snowy linen, which they have probably just finished ironing, but if the boys and girls look sharp they will discover several objects hidden in the picture which will produce cheerfulness in mankind quicker than anything else we know of.

## WHEN JIMMIE OWNED UP.

(CONTINUED FROM LAST WEEK.)

"O H, COME OFF," grinned the boy. "It wasn't my fault your dog chased the tabby. I didn't go for to set him on the cat at all, but only on the calf. Your dog hasn't any sense, that's what's the matter."

"Yes, he has, too. He wasn't raised on a farm and he don't know anything about cattle. Of course, he didn't know what you wanted, and he 'sicked' the first thing he saw. You've got us into a dreadful scrape and I hope you'll be satisfied," cried Jimmie, sternly.

"Pho! Who's going to know that your dog did it, I'd like to know, unless you play assy and run tell?" replied the strange boy, scornfully. "I think you and your dog are haysacks, and he pursued up his lips into a whistle and ran off to find new fields of mischief. For a long five minutes Jimmie stood stock still and thought what he should do. It was true enough that no one seemed to have seen the tragedy, and if he kept his own counsel Rover would be safe from the dreadful fate which might await him. The temptation was a very real one, and at last Jimmie turned resolutely upon his heel and called sharply to Rover to come away. He had not reached his home gate, however, when he turned and retraced his steps, lifting the furry body of his arms, betook himself slowly and sadly around the corner to the next street where the houses were very much finer and larger than those on the despised and humble River Street.

When Miss Samantha Blair opened her door in response to a timid knock upon it she was much surprised to find a white-faced boy upon the steps, holding the dead body of her beloved General in his arms, while at his feet crouched a very meek and ashamed looking dog.

"What does this mean, I should like to be informed?" Miss Samantha questioned, sternly.

"Please, ma'am, we've come to own up. Rover here has killed your cat, and we're both of us dreadful sorry, and oh, please, couldn't you let me work and pay you back and not have us arrested?" and there was a little quiver in the boy's voice, and his eyes looked as though the tears were not far away.

For a moment Miss Samantha seemed very angry, indeed, and then she looked once more at the boy and the penitent dog, and said:

"Sorry, are you? Well, you look it. I'm sure, and as for the dog, I don't suppose he can help his natural disposition. Dogs are bloodthirsty creatures. I've heard say—"

"Oh, but Rover isn't so at all," hastily disclaimed his master. "He's the kindest old fellow in the world, but you see, a boy sicked him on to a calf; and so he really couldn't help it."

Miss Samantha looked rather as if she didn't understand as well as she might, and so Jimmie hurriedly explained. When he had finished the lady nodded her head slowly, and said:

"The other day and asked me for work? Yes, and you wouldn't have me because I lived on River Street; but if you'll only let me work to pay you, your cat I'll try my best to please you," returned Jimmie, very humbly.

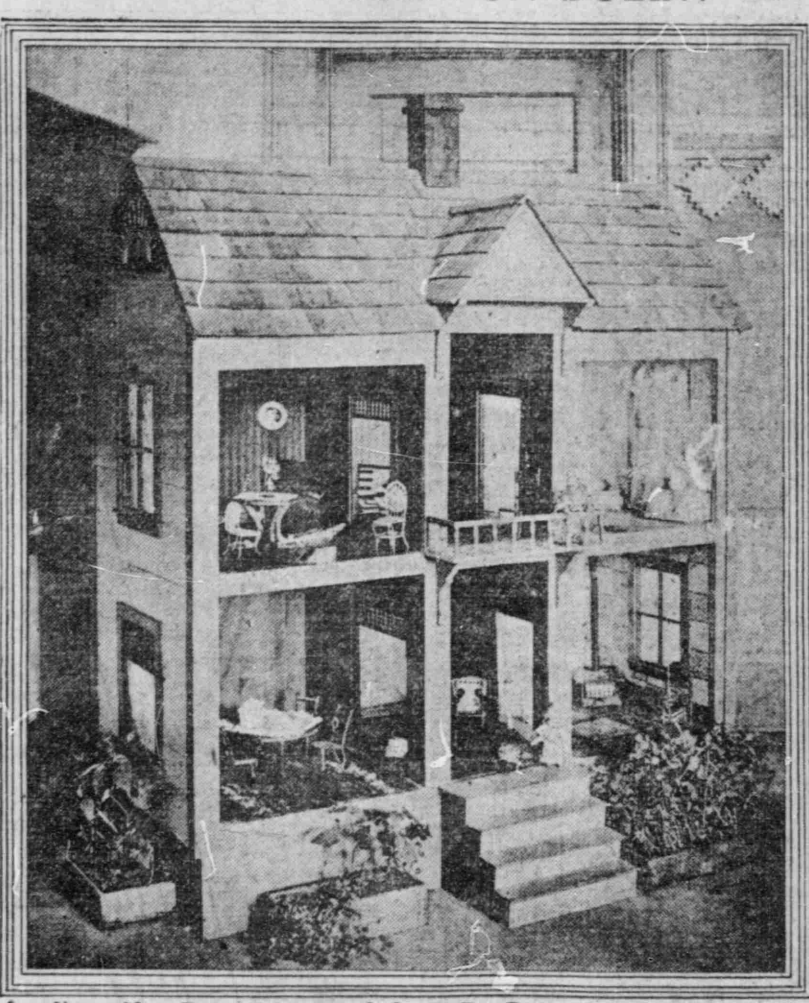
"Why did you want work the other day when you came and asked me? Your dog had not killed any cats then, had he?" asked Miss Samantha, suspiciously, for she had never had much faith in boys.

At that the whole story came out. How Jimmie had worried because Christmas day was at hand and there would be no turkey and no feast in the poor little home on River Street; he told of the sick father and the worried mother, and the doctor's brisk, decisive orders. Miss Samantha's eyes grew soft and pitiful long before the tale was finished, and when at last Jimmie paused for breath and looked pleadingly into her face, she said kindly:

"I think, Jimmie, I'll have to give you a trial, after all. Some way I like the idea of having a boy that owns up about the house. You needn't pay me anything for the cat, however. I'm sorry enough about it, but the General should have stayed at home and then he would have come to no harm. You may run over in the morning, and if you do your work as well as a think you will I'll pay you \$3 a week, and I think, too, I can help you about that Christmas dinner tomorrow. Now run along home and tell your mother not to worry any more, for you and Rover have found a job, and she gave the boy a kindly push toward the door as she smilingly said goodby.

Miss Samantha was as good as her word, and the dinner next day in the shabby house on River Street was a thing to tell about and remember. Jimmie declares to this day that it has been Christmas there ever since, for he found a true and helpful friend on the day when he and Rover "owned up."

## A FINE HOUSE FOR DOLLY.



DOLL HOUSE MADE BY THE CHILDREN OF ONE OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF MINNEAPOLIS

This wooden doll house was made by the children of the primary schools of Minneapolis. Usually wooden soap boxes are taken for the doll house and fitted up like a dwelling for grown-ups; but in this case the boys built the entire house, shingled the roof and made neat little window boxes.

The house stands about four feet high and the entire front is open, so that you can see into the rooms on both floors. The girls furnished the rooms completely, putting in dainty lace curtains and portieres and choosing flowers and vines for the green window boxes.

Miss Dolly, the proud owner of this miniature mansion, stands on the front steps, gowned in her prettiest house frock, also made by the school girls, while her sister leans over the balcony frames from worried; the chairs are made of rattan or paper and are copies

of the newest designs. The walls are papered in patterns suitable for such small quarters, and everything is complete, even to the tiny grilling over the door. The little girls had great fun putting up dainty lace curtains and portieres and choosing flowers and vines for the green window boxes.

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## THE SHELL OCEAN.

SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING PARTS.

Doris, a disobedient little girl, goes through a big shell in her garden. She comes out on the real ocean, where she meets a kindly mermaid. The mermaid takes her under the waves, and they start on a journey along the bottom of the sea. After seeing many interesting sights, they come to a high cliff under water and fall over it, going down to a beautiful garden of sea flowers. Here they have an adventure with huge fish, and escape by hiding. They reach a cave or grotto.

PART III—THE SECOND JOURNEY. THE CAVES OF THE OCEAN.

DORIS and Mermaid floated on into the grotto. As the hole in the rocks gradually became

larger the farther in they ventured, Doris began to fear they would meet a monster. Every time a corner was turned she felt afraid of being suddenly swallowed, like Jonah by the whale. And the cave became a great cavern so high and wide that the roof and sides looked like cathedral walls. Strange lights of brilliant hues covered the walls. The floor of the cave was not a sandy one, but was bare rock, on which grew myriads of sponges of every sort and size. There were corals, red, orange, and pink ones of odd shapes, little green, yellow and blue ones, and others like striped mushrooms. Their great size astonished Doris. "Why," she exclaimed, "a giant could use them for bath sponges."

From the roof hung pendant long ropes of seaweed of a pure white color, like grass that has bleached under a stone. "Oh, that looks just like lettuce," remarked Doris, tasting a bit.

"That's just what it is—sea lettuce," asserted the Mermaid. "Only don't eat it. No one ever dreams of eating it."

Doris hastily dropped her piece, but she laughed at the other.

"Why, lettuce makes the finest salad in the world."

But the impulsive Mermaid was far ahead again. Presently she discovered that she was lost. No kind guide appeared anywhere, and when she tried to call out an inquisitive little fish poked his nose into her mouth. She couldn't cry, for there was a whole ocean of salt tears there already! What was she to do?

Happily the Mermaid returned after Doris had made up her mind that she would soon become dinner for one of the shadowy forms moving about overhead.

The travelers had gone on some distance in the cave, when suddenly the Mermaid gave a great leap into the clear water and then swam back to Doris. Her eyes were large with fear.

"Get into that shell, quick! There's a horrid octopus coming. Doris promptly shrieked; then she leaped into a giant oyster shell that gaped near by. The Mermaid followed and they pulled down the cover, closing the shell except for a narrow crack. "Why, what a good thing that shell was here," Doris looked and nearly shrieked again. He was not so very dreadful, but he had eight legs, two enormous eyes and a beak like a bird. Besides, he was going backward. When he had passed Doris laughed.

"I don't see why you laugh, you goose!" pouted the Mermaid. "It's because everything is so funny," retorted Doris. "They all move around the wrong way. There's lobsters that go backward like the eight-armed thing. And that shooting clam went in circles, while the crabs all go sideways. It's ridiculous. Even you, Mermaid, don't walk, but you move."

"I wish I had my bicycle here to ride," she said. "The good-natured Mermaid, and she caught a large snail by its horns. That cautious beast promptly closed up, but Doris climbed on its shell. After a long wait she said: 'I guess it's gone to sleep, has it?'"

"Oh, no; it's just obstinate," and the Mermaid held out a bit of fish to it. The snail at once came out and followed, like a snail, after an apple, and although it was hard to keep a seat Doris had a fine ride. The snail went ever so slow, of course, but as it was doing its best Doris didn't whip it.

"Oh, it's better than a goat ride," laughed Doris, trying to sit or cling to it wabbles so, like riding an elephant."

"What's that?" asked the Mermaid. "It's a very large beast, with a trunk," explained Doris.

"Well, there's a real trunk up there," shouted her companion, pointing out a queer fish, shaped like a three-sided box. It was as stiff as a trunk, indeed, and only its head moved, and then it moved as if it had horns on its head like a cow.

You like this ride, but for real sport you shall try a different one when we go up to the surface again."

The ride was quite long, and they saw some fun animals on the way. There were dark holes, out of which ever looked—just like pussy in the back yard," declared Doris. There were crawling objects, looking for all the world like lengths of garden hose, with long, thin, pointed ends, which the Mermaid called periwinkles, and others like pieces of tape, or pin cushions, or ornamental pen wipers. They were all crawling about in an absent-minded way, often bumping into each other or going over one another's backs.

The ride ended in another small grotto, beyond which was a soft greenish light that seemed to come from everywhere and have no particular source. "It's the sunshine outside," explained the Mermaid. "Come on, and don't bump into that jellyfish; he's sure to hurt you."

Doris left her small steed with regret; but it didn't seem to mind, and the last she saw of it was going straight up the wall, feeding on a few pieces of weed, like a horse at dinner. The jellyfish next attracted her attention. It seemed to Doris like a large parlor table with three curved legs, that hung down all round the edge. The casters were little knobs on the feet. So the table was complete. Doris poked it with a piece of shell, which made it swim all the faster.

"It's just like everything else, for it swims head first and all crooked, the silly creature!" laughed she, "but who ever saw a parlor table wrap itself around a poor little fish?" The sunlight, sure enough, was shining down through the water when they came from the grotto.

"Why, Mermaid, we must be quite near the top of the water—and whatever is that over there?" exclaimed Doris. "It's the skeleton of one of those huge animals that floats on the waves. They drown under water."

"Why, nonsense! It's an old wrecked boat, you goose," cried Doris. "The idea of taking a boat for an animal!"

The Mermaid looked back and was surprised, but she swam toward the boat wreck. It was only a small boat, and had been years and years under water. Every particle of the wood was covered by shells, barnacles, and weeds. The interior was full of rubbish, shells, skeletons of fishes, crab legs, and other things, while one end was quite filled with a large sponge.

"There's some animal lives in there," said Doris timidly; and she had hardly said it before a great wolf fish rushed out and swam swiftly off. He was quite as long as Doris and a mouthful of sharp teeth showed as he passed, just like a real wolf snarling. He was brown, striped with black.

Doris was as badly frightened. Wasn't a wolf fish as apt to eat one as a wolf? But the Mermaid began unconcernedly to arrange her rose colored hair, as usual, so Doris sat down, too.

"Oh, there she is now!" suddenly exclaimed a voice near by. "Dear, dear, where have you been? We all thought Triton had carried you off—fins, my dear fins." And Doris, startled out of her senses, saw a whole troupe of mermaids, each more beautiful than the others in some way, approaching.

"And so you've been showing this curious creature around? We'll well!" The whole flock of mermaids began a whirling dance in circles that made Doris feel dizzy to watch. They all sang, too, in a discordant way that reminded Doris of sea lions barking. "Oh, scatter, scatter," cried the Mermaid, impatiently. "I am busy at present, so go play elsewhere."

"And I'm not a curious creature, either," cried Doris, as the mermaids stopped their dance to stare at her. She picked up a shell and threw it at the mermaids. It hit one of them on the nose, whereupon they all laughingly swam away, leaving a whirling sort of way very hard to follow.

"Who are they—your sisters?" asked Doris.

"Mercer, sakes, no! My sister—I have only one—would never be so giddy as that; they are only acquaintances."

"Neither would my sister have acted so," said Doris, who really had none at all. They are too polite."

"And me," said the Mermaid, "let us go down into the deep abysses, where there are the strangest monsters of all. And she swam away before Doris could stop her."

W. S. WALLACE.

(To Be Continued.)

## A Numerical Affair.

By G. M. L. BROWN.

'Twas an evening promenade, and all the figures—

At least all the Four Hundred—were on hand. Baker's dozen, also called Unlucky Number. Walked with Sweet Sixteen and listened to the band.

Twenty-one, just come of age, was proudly conscious.

As he strolled with Baseball Nine across the lawn; While the Sixes and the Sevens started quarrelling. And would keep it up, a number said, till dawn.

Several numbers slowly creeping down the pathway As All Fours were quickly recognized; So was wonder fleeting figure in the shadow. Who was then to run like Sixty, though disguised.

Number One sat down and ordered some refreshments.

"He's very selfish!" said his Better Half. Twenty-five went off to find some other quarters.

Thirty-nine read articles, nor deigned to laugh.

Three Score Ten proposed a dance, a quite select one.

"Admits only multiples five," he said; But the rest refused the use of Three-Four music.

So they had to make old Hundred do instead.

Then I left in some surprise and agitation. I had understood Arithmeticks to say That great harmony existed 'midst the figures.

But my eyes saw very differently that day!



"GET INTO THAT SHELL, QUICK!"